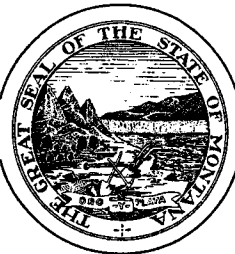


DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND CONSERVATIONEXHIBIT NO. 12
DATE 2-6-07
BILL NO. SB 345BRIAN SCHWEITZER
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February 6, 2007

RE: Senate Bill No. 345

Senator Gillan, Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Laurence Siroky. I am representing the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. I manage the Floodplain Program within the Water Resources Division. The program provides technical and administrative training and support for local government floodplain administrators. The bill compliments the legislative purposes outlined in the Montana Floodplain Act passed by the 1971 legislature. The 1971 Act provides local government the power thru local ordinances to regulate building within the 100-year floodplain.

The weakness of local floodplain management has been the general lack of floodplain mapping. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department have been charged with the task of identifying and mapping flood hazard areas. Unfortunately, mapping specific flood hazard areas have fallen behind the rate of our state's development along rivers and streams. The proposed legislation would provide the local government another tool to ensure that people and property are reasonably safe from flooding.

Montana has experienced flood losses of \$5.3 million since 1978. A recent Legislatives Services survey of just 17 counties in the state indicates that 3,800 structures are located within floodplains and have a combined value of \$275 million. The primary goal of the local floodplain programs is to reduce the loss of life and structural property through wise floodplain development and through the promotion of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). A very small percentage of the houses have flood insurance and so flooding would cause a substantial individual financial impact, an economic impact to local government infrastructure as well as disaster relief.

The Department urges the Committee to support the bill.

2/06/2007, Laurence Siroky, 444-6816